

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT, March 08, 2020



St. Thomas Aquinas - Thomas, West Virginia



Our Lady of Mercy - Parsons, West Virginia

SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS PARISH

Mission: OUR LADY OF MERCY

Pastor: Rev. Timothy J. Grassi, P.O. Box 300, Thomas, WV 26292 Tel: (304) 463-4488 www.sttsite.com

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Please contact the priest to make arrangements. Instructions for both parents are required. Sponsors from outside the Parish need a letter of eligibility from their Pastors.

SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY

Arrangements should be made with the Pastor at least six months in advance of the intended date of marriage. Preparation classes with the Pastor are required.



SACRAMENT OF ANOINTING OF THE SICK

If you know of anyone who is seriously ill, hospitalized, shut-in, or about to undergo surgery, please contact the Pastor or the Parish office to let us know.

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

Saturday 4:00 - 4:50 p.m. at St. Thomas Aquinas Church, and 30 minutes before all Masses and anytime upon request.

HOLY COMMUNION: *We welcome to the Holy Mass all who share our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. While all are welcome here, we cannot extend to all an invitation to receive Holy Communion. This is not for lack of Christian hospitality. Rather, it is the recognition by the Catholic Church that real divisions of faith and practice do sadly exist among Christians. Practicing Catholics who go to Confession whenever needed are invited to receive Holy Communion. Non-Catholic Christians and those Catholics who should not receive Holy Communion (including those married outside the church and those in need of the sacrament of Penance) are asked to pray for a spiritual communion with the Lord Jesus and for the unity of His Church. Those who are not receiving Holy Communion but who would like to receive a blessing are invited to indicate this desire by crossing their arms across their chests as they approach the priest in the Communion procession.*

LENTEN FISH FRY

Come join the Knights of Columbus for our Lenten Fish Fry's! Dinner includes an 8 oz fish fillet with tartar or cocktail sauce; dinner roll with butter; coleslaw; greenbeans; macaroni n'cheese; fruit dessert; coffee or punch.

Cost: Adults \$8.00 - Kids 12 & under \$4.00

~ CARRY OUTS AVAILABLE!~

The dinner will be at both locations from 4:00pm - 6:30pm,
At the St. Thomas Center and
Our Lady of Mercy Church social halls on:
Mar. 13, Mar. 20, Mar. 27 and Apr. 03.

DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL

Bishop Brennan is in the process of establishing a DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL. Every parish/mission in a Vicariate is being asked to elect TWO parishioners to serve on the Vicariate Council. Three representatives will then be selected from each Vicariate council to serve on the DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL which will meet with the Bishop in Charleston twice a year. The purpose of this Council will be to give the laity a significant, consultative voice in developing pastoral priorities, initiatives and plans to further the mission of Christ within the light of existing social, economic, demographic and cultural circumstances.

****WE NEED AT LEAST 2 PEOPLE TO STEP FORWARD TO REPRESENT OUR PARISHES.** Please give your name to Fr. Grassi or call the Parish office at 304-463-4488.

QUILT & STAINED GLASS RAFFLE

The Our Lady of Mercy Women's Guild is selling chances on a beautiful quilt and stained glass window piece, both made and donated by Maureena Andreas. Suggested donation of \$5 per ticket with two chances to win. The drawings will be held on Sunday, May 10th after the 11am Mass in Parsons. Please see one of the ladies after Mass to get your tickets.

ANNUAL MEN'S DAY OF REFLECTION MARK YOUR CALENDARS

All men are invited to a Lenten day of reflection on Saturday, April 4th. Coffee and light refreshments at 8:30am and spiritual talks begin at 9:15am until Mass at 5pm. This will take place in the St. Thomas Center and in the St. Thomas Church. Lunch will be provided. (There will be time for prayer and confessions as well.)

EVENTS ON THE HORIZON!!!

Mar 08 - OLM Women's Guild meeting after the 11am Mass

Mar 17 - Knights meeting after the 5:00pm Mass in Parsons

Mar 19 - St. Joseph's Day

**The Bible calls debt a curse
and children a blessing;**



**but in our culture we apply for a
curse and reject blessings.**

Something is wrong with this picture.

—Doug Phillips

LENT SCHEDULE

~Stations of the Cross~

WEDNESDAYS: Immediately after 5:00pm Mass at Our Lady of Mercy Church . (Wednesday Mass during Lent will be at 5:00pm.)

FRIDAYS: Immediately after 5:00pm Mass at St. Thomas Aquinas Church.

CONTRIBUTIONS FOR March 01, 2020

St. Thomas: \$1,526.06

Church in Central & Eastern Europe: \$178.00

Black & Indian Missions: \$322.48

Our Lady of Mercy: \$881.00

Church in Central & Eastern Europe: \$120.00

Black & Indian Missions: \$278.00

FOOD PANTRY

BLACKWATER MINISTERIAL FOOD PANTRY: The Food Pantry is in need of "valued" food items. This month we are seeking cereal. In subsequent months we will let you know what items are needed and ask your assistance in this need for our community.

What is a Solemnity?

By: Jonathan Mann

“Today is a great day, and on great days God gives great graces.”

A few years ago, I heard a priest begin Mass on the Solemnity of the Annunciation with these words, and since then they have often returned to my mind. What is a solemnity? Why is it important, and what makes it a great day?

As we all know, Sunday is set apart from the rest of the week as the Lord’s Day. It is reserved for worshipping God, spending quality time with family and friends, performing acts of charity, and resting from our labors. There are many liturgical observances of lower rank that fall on other days of the week – like memorials of saints, memorials and feasts of our Blessed Mother – but a few very special days take highest rank among the Church’s observances. These are called solemnities (or solemn feasts). Along with the celebration of Christ’s Passion, death, and Resurrection during the Easter Triduum, solemnities commemorate the most important and central mysteries of our divine faith. Hence they share the high rank of Sunday regardless of where they fall in the week. Examples include Christmas (Dec. 25), All Saints (Nov. 1), and the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Aug. 15). These three solemnities may be familiar to us as holy days of obligation, but there are also several other solemnities throughout the year, including the two which approach this month. On March 19th we celebrate St. Joseph, and on March 25th we celebrate the Annunciation of the Lord. For these two days, as for several others, there is no obligation to attend Mass for Catholics in the United States. Yet all solemnities remain great holy days, and so it is right that we reflect upon the Church’s intention in placing them on the liturgical calendar, and upon her vision for our observance of them.



Whether or not an obligation to attend Mass is in force, Holy Mother Church’s first recommendation for such days is that we do participate in the Eucharistic Sacrifice. Though it may not be a holy day of obligation, every solemn feast is by its nature a holy day. We are encouraged to regard such days as holy days of opportunity—the opportunity to commemorate the great mysteries of our faith, to ponder them more deeply, and to enter into these great mysteries by assisting at the Holy Sacrifice. The Church, rightly called our Mother, takes care that we, her children by Baptism, are given occasion in the course of her liturgical year to commemorate and celebrate the central mysteries of our faith. We do so above all by participating in the Mass and receiving Holy Communion—granted, in the state of grace and with proper preparation. Thus do we read in the Catechism that “the Church strongly

encourages the faithful to receive the holy Eucharist on Sundays *and feast days*, or more often still, even daily” (CCC 1389, emphasis added). Thus, far from a suggestion for the select few, participation in the holy Eucharist on feast days is Holy Mother Church’s recommendation to all of her children. Similarly, the Church intends that we allow the joy and the glory of a solemn feast to inform the way we spend the entire day. To the extent that our earthly responsibilities and circumstances may allow, we are encouraged to seek rest and refreshment, and to spend time with family and friends. We all know what it is to look forward to birthdays, holidays, and vacations: to mark our calendars, to plan special events for these meaningful times. To treat holy days this way—to plan ahead in order to spend time with Christ on days that are specially His—is to act according to the mind of the Church and according to our very identity as Catholic Christians. It is a fundamental truth that, as one fashions the habit of life, so goes the heart. When we shape the culture of our lives after the pattern of the Church’s liturgical observances, the particular graces associated with these mysteries elevate and sanctify our lives, not only on these great days, but always.

The two solemnities that approach this month present wonderful mysteries for us to ponder and celebrate. St. Joseph is a model for all men, especially husbands and fathers, as well as for all who work. He also plays a pivotal role in the coming of our Savior, both as protector of the Christ Child and His Mother, and as Christ’s link to David’s royal line. He is patron both of the Universal Church and of our Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. The Annunciation, meanwhile, is the great mystery of Christ’s becoming man within Holy Mary’s virginal womb while remaining God, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. On this great occasion we welcome our God to our hearts and to this world, and we see in His Blessed Mother our model for doing so. She is also the greatest of models for virgins, wives, and mothers—indeed, for all women. After her Son, she is the greatest example of holiness for everyone.

And so we return to our initial consideration. A solemnity is “a great day,” on which “God gives great graces.” Jesus invites us to respond to His Coming by asking for and embracing the graces that He has won for us as our Savior. In our secular culture it is often a challenge to keep holy days as the Church envisions, for work schedules, school, and a ceaseless onslaught of activity tend to compete with opportunities for Mass, prayer, and quiet reflection. Let us think about the deep, rich meaning of these solemn feasts and consider how we might celebrate them. Here in our parish there will be Mass in Parsons and in Thomas on these two upcoming holy days. And all day Christ in the Blessed Sacrament welcomes visitors. Let us fervently call to mind the treasures of grace that Jesus, our Divine Lover and Best Friend, desires to grant to our souls. Let us eagerly anticipate that encounter with Him by which He brightens our souls and deepens our union with Himself.

THE POWER OF SILENCE IN PRAYER

STEPHEN WALTERS

Cardinal Robert Sarah has some extremely powerful insights into the value of silence as it relates to our spiritual life and our relationship with God, which he has emphasized with the recent publication of his book *The Power of Silence*. I've tried to condense the most important of these insights into three key points. (Continued this week with key point #2.)

2. RELATIONSHIPS MATURE IN SILENCE

Lesson 5 of CCO's Discovery faith study introduces the idea of the relationships diagram, which offers three levels of a human relationship – single, dating, and married – which we can use as an analogy for our relationship with God: single corresponds to no relationship with God, dating corresponds to incomplete commitment to God, and marriage corresponds to complete commitment to God. The idea is that as we cultivate a relationship we move through these three stages; however, we usually neglect the possibility of using silence to help achieve that third stage.

Cardinal Sarah uses the image of a relationship to describe the power of silence in prayer: "When we are lovers, we always notice the slightest gesture of the one whom we love. It is the same with prayer. If we are accustomed to praying often, we can grasp the meaning of God's silence. There are signs that only two fiancés can understand. The person of prayer is also the only one to grasp the silent signs of affection that God sends him" (paragraph 174).

Here the Cardinal makes the point that the most powerful communication between lovers is that which is not spoken, and makes the further analogy that the same thing applies to our relationship with God. Venerable Fulton Sheen said the same thing in his book *Three to Get Married*: "Those who do not yet love one another deeply have need of words; those who deeply love, thrive on silences".

The Holy Family of Nazareth is a powerful example of the power of silence in our relationships, both with God and with the people around us. It is a well-known fact that St Joseph never speaks in any of the Gospels; he was a humble man of action rather than one of excess words and noise. St Matthew tells us that God speaks through His angel to Joseph four times, and each time Joseph does not speak either in the dream or when he wakes up. He simply gets up and does God's will without question. As for Mary, only St Luke and St John describe her speaking, and even then only a combined total of three times: when Gabriel visits her, when she and Joseph find the child Jesus in the Temple at Jerusalem, and finally at the wedding at Cana. The other two evangelists do not record any of her words at all. St Luke tells us that after the birth of Christ, "all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart" (Luke 2:18-19). Mary does not waste words: instead, she internalizes them and reflects on them in her heart.

PARISH ROSARIES
PRAYED

Total Rosaries for 2 weeks: 195

Total Rosaries since May 2016: 26,095

MASSES FOR THE WEEK

Second Sunday of Advent

Mar. 09 Monday	*Chris Johnson	7:15am Thomas
Mar. 10 Tuesday	Lucille Kotten	5:00pm Thomas
Mar. 11 Wednesday	*Miranda & Cedric Grace	5:00pm Parsons
Mar. 12 Thursday	Don Fink	5:00pm Thomas
Mar. 13 Friday	Toni Harrison	5:00pm Thomas
Mar. 14 Saturday	J. Pat Nichols	9:00am Parsons
Mar. 14 SATURDAY VIGIL	Frank Hoffner	5:00pm Thomas
Mar. 15 SUNDAY	People of Parish	9:00am Thomas
Mar. 15 SUNDAY	Sr. Pat Marren	11:00am Parsons

THOMAS

DATE	EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS	READERS	ALTAR SERVERS
03/14	Rita Johnson	Dana Quattro	Any available!
03/15	Brittany Cross	Matt Hinkle	Drew Simmons

PARSONS

DATE	EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS	READERS	ALTAR SERVERS
03/15	Miranda Grace & Addie Buckley	Cedric Grace	Any available

Cleaning: 03/08 - 03/14: Pat Usnik & Debbie Scarberry

The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston is committed to the protection of its children and young people. The Diocese complies with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People by maintaining an Office of Safe Environment. To report an incidence of suspected child sexual abuse, please contact your local law enforcement agency, or you may confidentially contact the West Virginia Bureau for Children and Families/Child Protective Services by calling the Child Abuse Hotline at 800.352.6513. To report suspected cases of sexual abuse by personnel of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston to the Diocese, please contact one of the Bishop's designees at 888.434.6237 (toll free) or 304.233.0880: Sister Ellen Dunn, ext. 264; Mr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Mr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; or Rev. Dennis Schuelkens, ext. 270 or call the Office of Safe Environment at 304-230-1504. For more information on the Diocese's Office of Safe Environment, please go to www.dwc.org, then click the "Diocese" tab, then click "Office of Safe Environment" under the "Offices" menu. To learn more about the Catholic Church's efforts in preventing sexual abuse of children in the United States, please visit <http://www.usccb.org>. Under "Issues and Action," click "Child and Youth Protection" from the drop down menu.

THE TRADITIONAL LATIN MASS

During the month of March,
the Tridentine Mass
will be offered at the following
times and church:
St. Thomas - 7:30am
(Low Mass) 03/08/20
Our Lady of Mercy - 12:30pm,
03/15/20 only when
requested in advance

If you would like to place someone
on our prayer line call:
Susie Gutshall (304) 478-3217
Or Cindy Long (304) 478-4833

Let us remember in prayer all
of our sick and shut-ins:

Champ Sedmock, Pat Ricottilli, "Sob"
Gennantonio, Mary Johnson, Jean
Sagace, Joyce Arnold, Donna Mason,
Elaine Watson, Paula Siler, Anne
McVicker, Jerry & Madonna DiBacco,
& Paul Wojtkowski.

We offer a hearty welcome to all
of our visitors! If you would
like to make a contribution to
our parish, please use the
visitor's envelope in the pew.